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FOB powers up expansion

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Fort Dix's Forward Operating Base (FOB) is the key to theater immersion training on post – and a massive expansion is underway there to help Soldiers meet the growing demands of the Global War on Terrorism.

During the past year, Dix has built new tents and set up trailers, sprung shelters, and container storage units in this area on the range, with several more projects under construction or in the planning stages. Dix is the largest mobilization sites in the country, with more than 97,000 Soldiers mobilizing and demobilizing through post since September 11, 2001. Thousands more are on the way this summer.

Expansion requires power, and two new pieces of equipment called switchgears were installed this week to help provide electricity to the FOB. Switchgears are panels set up to protect the wiring that brings the power out to the facilities.

These switchgears will support a new transformer soon to be installed to provide electrical services to new, existing, and future facilities including many of
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GEARING UP -- Ed Baldwin directs forklift driver Joey Frankowski as they move a switchgear into place at the Forward Operating Base. A pair of newly installed switchgears will help provide electricity to the ever-expanding training facility.



file photo

FABULOUS FOB—In the past year, numerous changes have been made to improve the Forward Operating Base (FOB) at Fort Dix. In addition to new tents and trailers, there have been recent upgrades in the electricity and at the Balad training site. Marvin Taylor, Directorate of Logistics Maintenance, Allied Trades, right, uses a plasma torch to convert conex trailers into village buildings at the Balad training site, above. The site was recently expanded by an additional 72 conex boxes. Bill Rackison, below left, and Jim Rogers, below right, move one of two new switchgears into place. Switchgears help provide electricity to the FOB by protecting the wiring that brings the power to the field. Fort Dix is the country's largest mobilization site, with more than 97,000 Soldiers mobilizing and demobilizing through post since September 11, 2001. Thousands more Soldiers are expected to mobilize through Fort Dix in the coming months.



Wayne Cook



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FOB expansion—

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the new and existing tents, two Army and Air Force Exchange Service trailers, a barber shop trailer, and a recently completed Engagement Skills Trainer, or EST trailer.

The EST is a weapons simulator with capabilities to simulate weaponry such as the M-16, M-9, and M-4.

One of the switchgears contains the main breaker, which works to protect the equipment for the electrical boards, and the other contains the panel, which distributes the electricity to the tents, trailers, and anything else that needs power.

"They're going to put 2,500 Soldiers out there so we need the facilities to be able to accommodate the demand," said Steve Whitmore, Directorate of Public Works operations officer. "It's going along pretty well so far and we anticipate that the upgrades will meet the needs."

This electrical surge upgrade for the FOB is an immense project costing more than \$100,000

and it is coordinated by the Department of Public Works, Jersey Central Power and Light, and Advanced Electric.

"We're trying to meet the military demands and as things evolve, we try to come up with the electrical solutions," Jim Rogers, Advanced Electric contractor, said.

So far the project is on schedule — despite the wet weather — and all parties involved hope to meet the increasing demands.

"This service upgrade is really needed to accommodate the existing and future Soldiers here at Dix and I think we will meet the schedule we're anticipating and it will end up going very well," Rogers said.

Soon two more switchgears and another new transformer will be installed in another part of the FOB and this one will power many of the new trailers and showers, and dining and MWR tents.

This is just another measure taken to meet the growing mission demands.